

ELECTION BOARD INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE

DATE: July 25, 2007

CALLED TO ORDER: 5:02 p.m.

ADJOURNED: 6:35 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

ATTENDING MEMBERS

Jackie Nytes, Chair
Lonnell Conley
Susie Day
Ron Gibson
Robert Lutz
Cherrish Pryor
Ryan Vaughn

ABSENT MEMBERS

AGENDA

Presentations:

Marion County Election Board – Beth White

Marion County Democratic Party – Chair, Mike O'Connor

Marion County Republican Party – Chair, Tom John

Tippecanoe County Election Board – Linda Phillips

Wayne County Election Board – JoAnn Stewart

ELECTION BOARD INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE

The Election Board Investigative Committee of the City-County Council met on Wednesday, July 25, 2007. Chair Jackie Nytes called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. with the following members present: Lonnell Conley, Susie Day, Ron Gibson, Bob Lutz, and Ryan Vaughn. Cherrish Pryor arrived shortly thereafter.

Marion County Election Board

Beth White, Marion County Clerk, introduced the other members of the Election Board: Mark Sullivan, Chairman, and Frank Otte, Vice-Chairman. She also introduced Andy Mallon, Election Board Director; Myla Eldridge, Deputy Director; Megan Sims, Deputy Director-Service Center Operations; Nate Brim, Program Coordinator; Daryl Black, Warehouse Mechanic; Dan Fair, Lead Election Clerk; and Melanie Chastain, Chief Fiscal Clerk.

Ms. White discussed a handout regarding poll worker pay from different counties in Indiana. She stated that this handout is for discussion purposes and does not represent any recommendation.

Chair Nytes stated that Marion County is not listed on the handout. Ms. White apologized for the missing information. She said that in Marion County, inspector pay is \$110 and Judge and Clerk pay is \$70. She said that there is now a half-day provision for judges and clerks at the rate of \$35. Councillor Gibson asked if Ms. White has any recommendations for allowances for food. Ms. White stated that she does not. She said that she is open to whatever the committee thinks is a good idea. Traditionally, it has not been done in Marion County. Councillor Gibson asked if the Election Board would explore cost analysis on how much food would cost. Ms. White stated that she could look into that.

Ms. White stated that the Election Board looked at other jurisdictions in the country and how they staff their Election Board. She gave information on the following: Jacksonville, Florida has 32 full-time and 25 part-time election board employees; Columbus, Ohio has 42 full-time employees; and Louisville, Kentucky has 36 full-time employees.

Ms. White distributed a handout regarding the year-to-date expenses of the Election Board; Exhibit A. Councillor Lutz asked what percentage of the Election Board's total budget this represents. Ms. Chastain stated that this is about half. Ms. White stated that some of the expenses are front-loaded with rent, computer, and warehouse payments. Councillor Lutz asked how much the Election Board saved by not having a sufficient amount of poll workers for the May 2007 Primary. Ms. Chastain said that the amount spent is under Election Board in Character 01, which is \$231,551.

Chair Nytes asked what the total budget in that line item was. Ms. Chastain answered that it is \$801,000. Ms. White stated that the Election Board paid the poll workers for 2006 out of the 2007 budget. She said that when the new administration arrived, the poll workers had not been paid, and cost was about \$6,200.

Councillor Conley asked if Ms. White could explain the taxi service line item expense. Ms. White stated that the Election Board has always employed taxi cabs on Election Day. She said that the taxi cabs take the traveling board members around to various locations, homes, and nursing homes. She said that they are also used to deliver absentee ballots around the community. Councillor Conley asked if that figure is for the Primary and General election. Ms. White stated that it is for the Primary.

Councillor Gibson asked if the \$194,000 under Contractual Services is used for voting machines and equipment. Ms. White answered in the affirmative. Councillor Gibson asked what the blank line item for \$80,000 represents. Ms. Chastain stated that this represents July's total expenditures for that Character that had been left out of the spreadsheet. She added that a correction should have been noted in the Election Board line item to read \$400,000 instead of \$231,551, due to some regular salary money that should have been shifted.

Councillor Day asked if a corrected spreadsheet can be sent to the committee. Ms. Chastain answered in the affirmative.

Chair Nytes if the Election Board has any cost estimates for satellite voting. Ms. White stated that the Election Board is working on some estimates.

Marion County Democratic Party (MCDP)

Michael O'Connor, Chair

Mr. O'Connor stated that there have been good discussions regarding re-precincting, and the general consensus is that everyone agrees that fewer precincts are needed in Marion County. He said that good progress is being made on the number and maps that will work for everyone. He said that August 31, 2007 is the deadline for submission to the State Election Board. Mr. O'Connor stated that the job duties of the inspectors are to make sure that the elections are run properly, make sure individuals that have the right to vote are provided that opportunity, and to make sure that the precincts are run well and within the confines of the law. He stated that he delegated that authority, with the agreement of the Marion County Democratic Party Central Committee (MCDPCC), to Ms. White as the Clerk of the County.

Mr. O'Connor stated that MCDP is going to continue to pay great deal of time and attention to make sure the basic nuts and bolts are taken care of as early as possible. He said that a letter went out to the Democrat precinct committee persons and Ward Chairs asking them to provide names for workers by August 31, 2007, so that MCDP will know who they are. If those positions have not been filled, the Election Board and

MCDP will then have enough time to replace individuals. Mr. O'Connor stated that MCDP is moving ahead nicely.

Marion County Republican Party

Tom John, Chair

Mr. John stated that Mr. O'Connor is correct in saying that there are a lot of precincts. However, progress was stopped because of the process of going through what precincts are being put in place and how the precincts are broken down. He said that the Republican Party's objective is to see a minimum amount of precincts in the County, strain on the community to provide poll workers relieved, and financial strain on the community to run precincts relieved. He said that people are much more mobile now, and it makes sense to have bigger precincts and to have operations that are run better, rather than operations that are particular to a small area. He said that the days of knowing everyone in your precinct, unfortunately, is mostly gone. Mr. John stated that reaching those objectives and coming to an agreement regarding re-precincting is something that they want to see happen.

{Clerk's Note: Councillor Pryor arrived at 5:35 p.m.}

Chair Nytes stated that there is a strong consensus regarding the need for fewer precincts. She asked if there could be a promise that this process of re-precincting can get done. Mr. John stated that he is not comfortable making promises. Mr. O'Connor stated that he is comfortable that Marion County will get there.

Mr. John stated that the Republican Party was not happy to see what happened in the May 2007 Primary, because at the end of the day, their job is to ensure that Marion County has good and fair elections regardless of which political party is charged. He said that the Republican Party submitted board appointments for 817 of 914 precincts in Marion County. He said that he softly committed to provide inspectors in 200 areas to ensure that precincts will be open.

Mr. John stated that with regard to the City, employees have the day off on Election Day. He said that this committee should look at having those employees work on Election Day. He also stated that he called for satellite voting two months ago. It will take stress off of the main voting center. Chair Nytes said that there are some complications with asking people to give up an eight-hour work day for a twelve or thirteen-hour work day.

Councillor Vaughn asked if it is fair to transfer the delegation of inspectors to the Clerk's office from either political party due to the man-hour and fiscal impact. Mr. O'Connor stated that the MCDP has a person on staff that is working with the Clerk's Office in filling those positions. He stated that he thinks it is the right decision for MCDP and the place the Party is today.

Chair Nytes encouraged both parties to keep up the good work for success in the November 2007 election.

Tippecanoe County Election Board

Linda Phillips, County Clerk

Ms. Phillips stated that a Vote Center is a polling place where any registered voter can vote, as long as the voter lives in the district holding the election. She said that with Vote Centers; there is no wrong place to vote. There are no disenfranchised voters because they are always in the right place.

Ms. Phillips reviewed a handout presentation in detail, which is attached as Exhibit B. Some of the key points of the presentation are:

- The Tippecanoe County Electronic Pollbook Software (TEPS) is a custom-written application that ties all 22 vote centers together.
- Check-in software was created for Tippecanoe County.
- Satellite absentee voting during 10 days prior to the election. They are conveniently located and open extended hours.
- Voter Education: Staff will make presentations to any interested group.
- Direct mail has and will be sent to every voter.

Ms. Phillips briefly explained the Election Day process. She said that 10 days prior to the election, each voter is mailed a postcard. That postcard shows their name, address, and precinct, and the voter is asked to bring this postcard to the Vote Center. She said that they are greeted by an election worker who inquires if they have photo identification (ID) and then directs them to the next open station to cast their vote.

Ms. Phillips stated that the software prevents voters from voting twice. It shows where that voter voted, and the time they checked in.

Ms. Phillips stated that there are some advantages to Vote Centers. Some of those advantages are:

- Fewer poll workers are required. Staffing can be tailored to turnout.
- Voters enjoy the convenience of being able to vote at any location.
- Satellite absentee voting reduces the Election Day staff required.
- There are no wrong places to vote, so fewer voters are disenfranchised.
- Absentee ballots are counted centrally; this eliminates the need to transport ballots to the polls.

Ms. Phillips stated that there are some disadvantages to Vote Centers. Some of those disadvantages are:

- Vote Centers may not necessarily cost less.
- Significant investment is required in technology.
- Voter education is a significant challenge.

- Fewer poll workers are needed, but finding poll workers with computer skills is more difficult.
- Training poll workers requires more effort.

Wayne County Election Board

JoAnn Stewart

Ms. Stewart stated both Ms. Phillips and herself chose to present together because Wayne County follows the same concept as Tippecanoe County, but Wayne County was a much smaller scale. Wayne County had to follow the Indiana Code in order to satisfy the State. Ms. Stewart stated that they went from 31 polling locations down to four. She said that there are two full-time and part-time employees at the Clerk's Office and there are three members on the Election Board in Wayne County. Ms. Stewart said that in Wayne County, the poll worker pay was increased. She said that normally there would be a staff of six poll workers per polling location, and that was increased to nine by utilizing another staff position called greeters.

Councillor Pryor asked if there were any paper ballots used or if they just relied on the computer and had the provisional ballots. Ms. Phillips stated that the only ballot Tippecanoe uses is provisional. Ms. Stewart stated that Wayne County uses paper ballots for all in-house absentee voting, traveling board, and by mail. Councillor Pryor asked what the voter turnout was this past election using the Vote Centers. Ms. Phillips stated that Tippecanoe County did not have an election because there was no contest in the races. They held a mock election, and several hundreds of people showed up. Ms. Stewart stated that Wayne County increased voter turnout by 46%.

Councillor Conley asked if the increase in numbers for the vote centers was due to convenience and he asked what the turnaround time was for voters. Ms. Stewart answered in the affirmative, adding that turnaround time was estimated less than ten minutes, depending on the lines.

Councillor Day asked if voting ten days before the election, does the voting centers close at 6:00 p.m. on Election Day. Ms. Phillips stated that it goes on until the last voter in line at 6:00 p.m.

Chair Nytes asked what election costs are relative to size of their community. Ms. Phillips stated that their total election budget for 2007 was \$345,000 for the municipal election, and next year, the budget is running around \$380,000. Chair Nytes asked if there are any communities nationally using Vote Centers with a paper ballot and optical scan. Ms. Phillips stated that Larimore County, Colorado does.

Chair Nytes called for Public Testimony.

Aver Handleman, citizen, asked how the two different counties handle recounts. Ms. Phillips stated that the system they use has the ability to print out the exact copy of any ballot that was cast, so that an audit can be done.

Jim Mann, citizen, asked if the difference in cost is due to postcards and asked when the results come in. Ms. Phillips answered in the affirmative stating that postcards are a huge expense, and the results come in immediately.

Chair Nytes stated that a key portion is the electronic poll books. Was it visualized using the electronic poll book even if the electronic voting machines were not used. Ms. Phillips answered in the affirmative.

Chair Nytes referred committee members to Proposal No. 256, 2007, and stated that the committee has not taken action yet on the proposal formally, as mentioned by Councillor Borst at the last Council meeting. She stated that while the committee dealt with many issues in the proposal, they have not yet addressed the proposal directly. She said she would like to deal with the proposal at the next committee meeting and encouraged members to take a look at it before then.

Councillor Vaughn asked if Ms. White, can provide an updated chart regarding election costs. Ms. White answered in the affirmative.

Councillor Lutz asked how many registered voters are in Marion County. Frank Otte, Vice Chairman, Marion County Election Board, stated that according to current voter registration records, there are approximately 498,000.

Councillor Pryor asked if Marion County were to propose a Vote Center, how long it would take to have that implemented and up and running properly. Ms. White stated that there is an application process to the Secretary of State. She said that Marion County must get approval to have this system in the County. Such a process would probably take a couple of years.

There being no further business, and upon motion duly made, the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jackie Nytes, Chair